

### **The “Nigger Girl”**

Who knew that the world I live in is different than what others are used to? A military brat, that’s what most people would call me, but I am so much more than that, I believe the surroundings that I grew up in has given me sort of a “colorless” view of things. As I walk outside my door, I see a little black boy pushing a little white girl on the swings, she looks back at him and giggles egging him to push her faster and higher, they don’t have a care in the world. I see an Asian girl playing tag with white boy, she falls and he picks her up and whips the tears away from her face as he walks her back to her home. Who knew that this not normal in some places? I live in a community where there is no such thing as a “dominant race”, There are blacks living right next door to whites, whites living right next door to Asians, we are all use to this because there is no such thing as a minority, there is a mix of every race you can ever Imagine and we live in our own little world on our military base.

My mother moved to America about twenty-years ago to escape the violence that was beginning to erupt in Panama. Her and her family packed their bags and made a new life in Austin, Texas. Soon after she moved to America, she met and fell in love with my dad while he was stationed at Ft. Hood, Texas. About a year after they were married, I was born, and my dad had been informed that for the next eight years we were going to start a new life in Mannheim, Germany. A lot of people perceive living on foreign lands as having to love among the citizens of another country, who might, I add, are very nice. But in the army, we are confined to our own little town; we have our own schools, our own grocery stores, houses, banks, bowling alleys, gyms and even night clubs. Germany is really where I got a lot of my personality from considering the fact I was there from elementary all the way to my 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. My classes were a big melting pot of different ethnicities and backgrounds, not to mention we didn’t judge you off the clothes you wore either, since we all had to wear uniform. At the end of my 8<sup>th</sup> grade year my dad got

orders to move to Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. I would start high school in an entirely different country at an entirely different school; I could still feel all the nervousness that was build up in my body.

It was a shock driving to my new home, considering the fact my dad no longer wanted to live on the military base but a few miles away from it, he said he needed to “get away”. My neighborhood was much different than what I was used to, I think we were the only black family for miles. It was really gloomy neighborhood, we lived in a nice house, but there were a lot of houses by us that were broken down and old, houses that looked like the owners hadn’t cleaned the outside for months. Every time I went out to try to make friends with me neighbors you could feel the hate built up in their parents eyes, I would smile at them and I would be lucky to get a fake smirk back, I rarely got those though, just a scowl, so I stopped going outside. I stayed in my house most the time, sure I wanted to go out and play with the other kids outside, but their parents never seemed to want me around, they never said it, but I knew that’s what they were thinking, I was just ready to start high school, and hang out with kids who were more like me.

The first day of high school slowly peaked around, I had been up the entire night before so I keep pressing snooze on my alarm until I only had ten minutes left before the bus came. When I realized what time it was I bolted up and through my clothes on. I could hear the bus pull up. I barely made it there on time. The bus driver had already reeled back in the stop sign to inform us that he was ready to drive away. I ran on the bus just in time, I sat down in the first available seat because I knew the bus driver was not very happy with having to wait for me. I was way to sleeping to keep my eyes open at this point, it was dark on the bus, it was the crack of dawn, and I slowly felt into a deep sleep.

I woke up to a rub on my cheek. I had fallen asleep on the person sitting next to me, and I was more than embarrassed. Thankfully, he was actually kind of cute, and seemed to not be displeased. He had pale skin and brown hair. To most people he would probably appear as kind of a nerd, or a bookworm, but there's something that I saw in him that I really liked about him, and I could tell that he felt the same way about me. When we got off the bus he walked me to my locker and introduced himself as Jason. It was probably the first time I had talked to a boy since I moved to Missouri. I had never been attracted to white guys really, but I felt like he was really special. He definitely wasn't a football player or basketball player. He wasn't the tallest or the best looking, but he was sweet and that's all that really mattered to me. I wrote my number on a slip of paper and handed it to him. I knew that this was going to be the start of a new chapter in my life.

Jason and I were on the phone pretty much every day for the next couple of months, things were becoming more serious between us. We were almost inseparable and I was sure I had fallen in love for the first time. After school Jason and I would always come to my house and hang out and watch movies, yet I started growing really angry because he never invited me to meet with his family. I wondered why. Maybe I wasn't good enough for him? Maybe he didn't think I was pretty enough to meet his family? These questions in my head started turning into verbal arguments between Jason and me. Finally, my nagging had paid off, he told me that I could come to his house, and he warned me that things would probably be different after I went through. I didn't really know what he meant by this or what to expect.

I remember the visit to his house like it was yesterday. I peeked outside my window, waiting anxiously for Jason to come pick me up so he could walk me down to his house. When he finally came in view, I remember my heart sinking down into my stomach; I could feel Goosebumps rise on my skin. I was really about to meet my boyfriend's parents. He didn't look too excited though. He had more of a scared

look on his face, and his pace began to get slower and slower as we made our way closer to his house.

When we arrived at his house there was debris all over his front lawn. There was a broken down van in the front of his house and his dogs barked vigorously at me. When we got to his front door he stopped, looked at me and said "Do you really want to do this?" "What kind of question is that" I thought. Of course I wanted to meet his parents, without saying anything to him I pushed the door open just slightly.

His dad was sitting on a reclining chair surrounded by filth, smoking a cigarette with the TV loud enough that it could burst your eardrums. It was dark in the room and it reeked of urine. His dad looked at us and said, to Jason: "What are you doing with that nigger? Hope that ain't no friend of yours boy. I'll tie up the both of you if you don't get that little nigger girl away from me." Jason slowly shut the door; he looked at me and said "Is that really what you wanted to hear". I had never felt so embarrassed in my life, I was embarrassed for myself because I had just got called a nigger in front of my boyfriend, but I was also embarrassed for Jason, to show me the kind of upbringing that he had, it was despicable and his father was a disgrace. I was only fifteen, a kid. I didn't know yet that people will judge you, based on the color of your skin and not the content of your character. I walked back home by myself, eyeliner running down my cheeks and snot dripping out of my nose. I never spoke with Jason again. There was no way I could talk to someone who was acquainted with such a judgmental monster.

It's been five years now, if I could get into contact with Jason I would let Jason know that I am not mad at him, I was just embarrassed and hurt by the person whom is his father. At the time, I did not want to associate myself with anybody who was like that or people who were surrounded by such negativity, because I knew they were wrong for their hurtful and racist minds, I was only a kid, so I was not wise enough to know that it had nothing to do with me or the way I look, it was not my fault. I am curious to know the girlfriends Jason had after me. Did he take his father's advice and stick to his own race? Maybe

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I could have been the reason for one less ignorant person in the world, who knows. Doesn't matter your race you should be with who you want to be with because they make you happy, and now I truly see that now. Racism is not something that people develop overnight. It's more of a psychological disorder that is brought on by bad influences or bad experiences. About a week ago I decided to drive past Jason's house. There was his dad, sitting outside on the porch with filth surrounded by him in a house that looked like it was due to be condemned any day now, he looked nothing more than miserable, and look at me, the "nigger girl", going to a prestigious private university half way through my bachelor's degree.